

## Notes on the History of Pottawattamie County (No. 13)

D. C. Bloomer

ISSN 0003-4827

Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.

---

### Recommended Citation

The Annals of Iowa, 12(3) (Jul. 1874): 219-236

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

## NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY.

BY. D. C. BLOOMER.

(Continued from page 119.)

THE board of supervisors convened on the 1st of January, 1872. It consisted of A. M. Battelle, chairman; J. R. Reed, J. C. Layton, Simeon Wright, and J. B. Blake. The bonds of the new county officers were approved, and John Bennett took his post as auditor and clerk of the board, E. G. Sears being his assistant. Samuel Haas, Thomas Officer, and J. R. Reed, were appointed directors of the poor for the year. Joseph Moss was appointed deputy sheriff; H. P. Warren, deputy treasurer; and J. R. Reed, county attorney. The *Non-pariel*, *Times*, and *Avoca Delta* were authorized to publish the proceedings of the board.

No important business was transacted at the January session beyond the settlement with county officers, the hearing of the usual number of road applications, and the allowance of accounts against the county.

At the September session of the board, the new township of Belknap was created, comprising township 75, range 40, with the exception of one row of sections on the eastern side attached to Center township. The old name of James was retained by township 76, range 40.

At the October election 24 votes were polled in Belknap and 20 in James township. The total county and state tax levied this year by the board was sixteen mills.

The township of Neola was organized at the June session of the board; it consists of township 77, ranges 41 and 42; is twelve miles long from east to west by six miles wide from north to south. Musketo creek runs diagonally very nearly through the center from north-east to south-west, the line of the Chicago, Rock Island,

and Pacific railroad passing along its valley. The village of Neola is situated very near the center of the township. The surface is composed of undulating prairie, well watered but almost entirely destitute of timber. The soil is very fertile and is being parceled out into excellent farms by the steady tide of emigration that is coming into the country.

In January agricultural products were quoted at the following prices: Wheat, 95 cents to \$1; corn, 20 cents; oats, 21 to 25 cents; barley, 35 to 45 cents; and butter 25 to 30 cents.

The winter was regarded as a very cold one, the thermometer frequently being down below zero.

The funeral of M. L. McPherson was attended on the 2d of January from the Methodist church, he having died in St. Louis on the 29th of December. The deceased was a prominent lawyer, and at the time of his death held the office of prosecuting attorney for the third judicial district. He was a native of North Carolina, but emigrated to Iowa at an early day, and had been a member of the state senate, a presidential elector in 1860, and paymaster, with the rank of major during the war. His remains were borne to the grave by the members of the Pottawattamie county bar. Col. D. B. Dailey, of Council Bluff, was appointed to the office made vacant by the decease of Maj. McPherson.

Early on the morning of the 11th of January the Pacific House was discovered to be on fire; the inmates were hastily aroused from their slumbers, and all succeeded, though with much difficulty, in making their escape from the building. A strong wind was blowing and the fire made rapid progress, but through the active and intelligent exertions of the firemen it was checked, after burning the north-western portion of the building. A steamer from Omaha arrived to assist in subduing the flames, but not until after they had been effectually checked. The loss to Mr. S. S. Baylis, the owner of the building, was about \$15,000, mainly covered by

insurance, and to Dr. Bragg, the lessee, about \$8,000, also largely insured. Several merchants in adjoining buildings removed their goods, but their damages were mostly made up by the insurance companies. A number of boarders at the hotel suffered severely from being so suddenly turned out of doors.

On the 24th of January Sherman Brown was shot in Rockford township, by John S. Goss, and died about a week thereafter. The parties were neighbors, but a bitter feud had existed between them for some time. Goss was arrested and indicted for murder, and had his trial in the following year before the district court, when he was acquitted, the jury returning a verdict of not guilty.

The contest over the election of United States senator by the general assembly, excited a great deal of interest here, and at least half a dozen of the citizens of Council Bluffs spent several days at Des Moines urging the claims of their favorite candidates. Judge Caleb Baldwin and his brother, John T. Baldwin, took opposite sides in the question, the former supporting Mr. Allison with great zeal, and the latter just as anxious that Mr. Harlan should succeed. This gave rise to a good many amusing anecdotes among their respective friends. One of them was to the effect that the Judge, on being requested by Mr. Harlan to help him through the struggle, replied that he could not do so as he had promised Mr. Allison his assistance, but added, consolingly, "my brother, John T., will be over in a day or two and he will give you a lift."

Early in this month the subject of dividing the county began to be earnestly discussed throughout the eastern towns. The first public meeting, to promote the object, was held at Bird's school house, in James township. J. A. T. Bates was chairman, and J. B. Harrod and David Hunt, secretaries. Addresses were delivered by A. M. Battelle, J. C. Layton, C. V. Gardner, J. L. Fétler, and Josiah True, and strong resolutions in favor of a division were adopted. A memorial to the legislature in favor

of the measure was prepared and generally signed. It was proposed that the new county should comprise a strip eighteen miles in width from east to west, taken from the eastern end of Pottawattamie county, and containing twelve government townships, being twenty-four miles in length from north to south. A bill for its erection, under the name of Belknap, was introduced into the General Assembly of 1872, but was defeated. Such a bill, submitting the question to the voters of the whole county, was enacted at the session of 1874, and will be passed upon by them in October of this year.

On the first of February Mr. Nehemiah Baldwin entered upon his duties as register of the United States land office in Council Bluffs. His predecessor, Mr. Sylvanus Dodge, had died while holding the office on the 24th day of December preceding. He had formerly resided in Salem, in the state of Massachusetts, where he held important public offices, and exercised a large and salutary influence in the community. For the last six years he had resided in Council Bluffs, and maintained the reputation of a pure and worthy citizen. He had held the office of register of the land office for nearly three years.

The work on the Union Pacific bridge across the Missouri river went steadily forward during the winter, and was completed early in the spring. The first passenger car drawn by an engine from the Union Pacific road crossed the bridge on the 22d of March and moved eastward to the depot of the Rock Island railroad where its advent was witnessed by a large number of the citizens of Council Bluffs.

But previous to this date the question as to how this bridge should be operated had attracted much earnest and serious attention. By the citizens of Pottawattamie county, and, indeed, by the state generally, it was claimed that the Union Pacific company should operate its road across the bridge as one continuous line to its initial or starting point at Council Bluffs. The corpor-

ate authorities of that city had paid for the right of way for the road for a distance of over a mile and a half inside their corporate limits, and claimed that a contract existed with the company by which it was bound to so operate its road. The General Assembly of the state had early taken action on the subject, and on the 26th of February, 1872, had, by a unanimous vote of both houses, prohibited the railroad terminating at Council Bluffs from making any transfers of freight, passengers, or express matters to or with any other railroad company at or near such terminus, either by delivering or receiving the same, at any other place than in the state of Iowa at or near the point at which the railroad, extending to the state of Iowa, terminates, and providing severe penalties for any violation of this law.

But the directors of the Union Pacific company took a different view of the situation, claiming first, that they had entered into a contract with the city of Omaha, and the county of Douglass in Nebraska, by which the former was made the starting point for all their western bound trains, and the place for the transfer of freights and passengers. Second, that the Union Pacific bridge was an independent and separate property from the remainder of this road, and for the construction of which a distinct class of bonds had been issued, and insisting therefore, thirdly, that the Iowa railroads should run their cars across the bridge, paying to the Union Pacific a reasonable compensation for that privilege, and thus making actual points for the transfer of freights and passengers to and from these different roads, in the state of Nebraska.

On the 12th of March a meeting of all the superintendents of the Iowa roads was held in Council Bluffs, at which the determination was arrived at, and announced to the superintendent of the Union Pacific, that their roads terminated at Council Bluffs, both in law and in fact, and that their cars would not run westward from that city, and of course would not cross the Union Paci-

fic bridge. This resolution was firmly adhered to, by these roads, and it seemed as though a hiatus of about two miles would occur in the line of travel across the continent, and in fact the old mode of transfer by steamboat across the river did actually continue for several days after the bridge was completed and ready for use.

To end this difficulty a transfer train was started by <sup>v</sup>Mr. Sickles, superintendent of the Union Pacific, which runs over the bridge, and conveys passengers and freight from the terminus of the Iowa roads in Council Bluffs to the starting point of the former road on the west side of the river. The toll or fare charged on this train is fifty cents for each passenger and \$10 for each loaded freight car. It is a very inconvenient arrangement for the public, as well as an expensive one. It renders necessary the transfer of all passengers, from car to car, and also the moving in the same way of all baggage, mail, express, and a large portion of the freight, on the arrival of each train from the east or west. Earnest efforts have been made to secure its discontinuance, and induce the company to run its trains to the initial point of the road, as established by law, in Council Bluffs, but thus far without success.

The reasons for this course are quite apparent to persons conversant with the subject. From the excessive tolls collected for crossing the bridge, a handsome income is derived by the company, and at the same time certain important local interests in the city of Omaha are greatly promoted.

The question is far from being a local one, and has largely attracted the attention of the whole country, and congress must at an early day decide whether this gigantic corporation, which has received such liberal assistance from the general government, shall forever continue to impose this heavy burden and these vexatious delays upon the business, commerce and travel passing over its road.

The locality where the transfer of freight and passengers between the Iowa roads and the Union Pacific is situated in the southwestern part of Council Bluffs. It speedily grew into importance. Long platforms were erected by the Iowa roads for the transaction of their business; offices were opened by each of them for the sale of tickets, and telegraph wires extended to them. The Union Pacific built a covered platform over eight hundred feet in length; also, a good sized hotel, and a round house, and opened ample cattle yards. The city erected bridges, opened a good road, and laid down a wide sidewalk, and the track of the horse railroad was changed so as to run to the same point. The cars on the latter are, on their arrival at the transfer grounds, attached to a dummy engine on the Union Pacific road, and thence taken over the bridge to Omaha, thus making the journey between the two cities both rapid and pleasant.

The city election in April was contested with a great deal of zeal and determination. The republicans, as usual, about ten days before the election nominated a full ticket with Dr. N. D. Lawrence at its head. In opposition to this a people's ticket was formed which was headed by Samuel Haas. Both gentlemen were popular men and spared no efforts to secure an election. The former was successful by 141 majority in a total vote of 1,142. The other officers chosen at the same time were F. A. Burke, recorder; J. W. Morse, city marshal; Jacob Williams, treasurer; Thomas Bowman, assessor, and L. W. Babbitt, C. A. Gould, N. S. Monroe, H. H. Oberholtzer, S. N. Porterfield and T. M. Collins, aldermen. The city council, at its first meeting, appointed J. R. Reed, city attorney, L. P. Judson, city engineer, and Jacob Mithon and Elias Thornton, supervisors. During the year Horace Everett and D. C. Bloomer were appointed aldermen to fill vacancies in the board.

At the school election in March John F. Evans and James B. Rue were elected directors without opposition,



and the necessary funds were voted for the support of the schools for the coming year. The total expenditures of the city for schools during the year ending March 1st, were \$37,890.61, of which the sum of \$16,212.50 was paid to teachers.

During the early months of the year a company was organized in Council Bluffs for the erection of a paper mill. The capital stock was fixed at \$25,000 and was nearly all subscribed before work was commenced in March. The first board of directors of the company was composed of Charles Hendrie, R. J. Cory, E. W. Davenport, E. L. Shugart, and S. Farnsworth. The mill was located on Musketo creek, in the southeastern part of the city, and was completed early in the summer, but it had been in operation only a few weeks when it was burned down early on the morning of the 30th of August. Fortunately it was quite largely insured, and with the funds thus saved, together with others raised mainly through the exertions of Mr. Charles Hendrie, the president of the company, the mill was rebuilt in a more substantial manner in 1873, and has (1874) recently again gone into operation.

During the pendency of the city election in April and for a period of about two weeks a small party paper, called the *Evening Star*, was issued by W. R. Vaughan, proprietor, J. H. Keatly being editor. On the 2d of July, Mr. Vaughan, who had previously established a job office and purchased a steam press, issued the first number of the Council Bluffs *Republican*, a daily evening paper of seven columns. For a short time, Council Bluffs enjoyed the luxury of three daily newspapers, viz: the *Nonpareil*, *Republican* and *Times*, the first being issued in the morning and the other two in the afternoon of each day. This proved to be too much of a good thing, and the *Times* was discontinued on the 14th of October, after having been printed about two years and a half, and the daily issues of the *Republican* ceased a month or two later. It has been continued as a weekly paper and is still issued.

The *Council Bluffs Christian Advocate* was commenced early in the spring, Rev. F. P. Bresee, editor; Rand & Knots, publishers. It was a small monthly publication, and is still published, greatly enlarged and improved.

On the evening of May 2d a very successful concert was given at Dohany Hall by Miss Fanny Kellogg, assisted by Mrs. George L. Everett, Mr. Cooper, and several other accomplished musicians. This young lady who had resided in Council Bluffs from childhood, and who was noted for singular grace of person and vivacity of mind, had early shown decided musical ability. This pleasing talent was carefully cultivated and encouraged by her parents, and subsequent years have confirmed the indications of her early youth. She has frequently sung in concerts throughout many towns of the west with the most marked success, and she is now engaged in acquiring a thorough musical education with competent instructors in eastern cities. Her friends confidently predict for her a brilliant career in the musical world.

Much attention has always been given in Council Bluffs to the cultivation of a taste for music in all its varied forms. Mr. Joseph Mueller has for many years been engaged both as an instructor in this delightful art and as a dealer in musical instruments. This year (1872) he removed his store into a fine large building in the post office block, filling it with all classes of goods connected with that branch of business. His sales-room is over one hundred feet in length, and the aggregate amount of sales during the year was very large.

On the 14th of June, about one hundred ladies and gentlemen, representing the Iowa Press Association, passed through Council Bluffs on an excursion to Great Salt Lake City, which had been generously tendered to them by the Union Pacific railroad. The writer of these notes accompanied them on this trip, which proved to be a most delightful one. Leaving Omaha on the afternoon of the 14th, we arrived in Salt Lake City in the evening of the second day thereafter. The ride over

the plains and through the mountains was exciting and exhilarating. The weather was superb and all enjoyed the varied and magnificent scenery, through which the road passes, with the greatest zest. At the Mormon capital a day was spent in visiting the Tabernacle, Camp Douglass, the Warm Springs, where all partook of a luxurious bath in its tepid waters, a visit to Brigham Young, concluding with an evening at the Mormon theatre. The next day was occupied in a ride on a steamboat on Great Salt Lake, and up the tortuous channel of Bear river to the city of Corinne, where our palace cars awaited us on the Central Pacific. Entering these on the morning of the 19th of June, the return trip to Council Bluffs occupied two days, the party separating at the latter point, on the afternoon of the 21st, and proceeding thence to their homes. The journey was one which will long be remembered by all who were so fortunate as to share in its pleasures and excitements.

On the 21st of June the annual commencement of the Council Bluffs High School was held, when six young ladies, viz: Hattie Williams, Mary Warren, Lizzie Oliver, Ida Kirkpatrick, Ingletta Smith, and Verna Reynolds, read their essays and received their diplomas. This closed the school year, which had been marked by good conduct on the part of the pupils, and general faithfulness and zeal among the teachers. The annual appointment of teachers followed soon after. A number of changes were made in the list, and nearly all the graduates from the High School were employed by the school board to engage in the work of instruction for the ensuing year.

The 4th of July was celebrated in Council Bluffs by a display of fast trotting and running on the grounds of the Agricultural Society, or in other words, by a big horse race. This trial of speed was under the charge of the officers of the County Agricultural Society, or at least a part of them. There was a large crowd on the grounds, over 2,800 tickets being sold. The Fire De-

partment was present and made a very creditable display. There were four "trials," both in running and trotting, and considerable money changed hands as the results of the races were decided. The best time made in trotting was 2:40. A considerable number of citizens also assembled in Glendale, and had a dinner and speeches in a quiet way, the former being brought on the ground in baskets.

On the morning of the 16th of August the extensive furniture store of J. A. Eno, on Main street, in Council Bluffs, was burned, together with several other buildings. The loss on his stock was \$7,000; insured to nearly double that amount. The building was totally destroyed. It was owned by A. S. Bryant, whose loss was about \$8,000; no insurance. The other sufferers by the fire were: Wm. Meyer, \$1,500; J. Phifer, \$1,500; S. W. Ross, \$200. A heavy rain, which came on while the fire was still burning, saved a number of other buildings. Among those destroyed was the one formerly occupied by the Congregational church, and erected in 1854. The fire was clearly the work of an incendiary, and was afterwards the subject of protracted investigation in the courts of the county, but no evidence could be found to point out the guilty party.

On the 5th of August, the First National Bank of Council Bluffs was robbed of \$20,000 in currency. The money was taken sometime between 10 o'clock in the forenoon, when the safe was opened by the cashier, Mr. S. Farnsworth, and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when the money was first discovered to be gone. The cashier had been in the bank alone during a portion of the day, and the robbery was supposed to have been accomplished while he was engaged in waiting on customers at the counter, the thief entering through a back door and reaching the safe unperceived, and making his exit without attracting any attention. The money was not known to have ever been recovered. A few months subsequent to this time, Mr. John F. Evans was appointed President of the Bank, Mr. Farnsworth continuing to act as cashier.

On the 13th of September, John B. Adams was killed at the depot of the Burlington and Missouri river railroad, while engaged in coupling cars. A short time previous, Peter Anderson, a laborer on the Union Pacific embankment, was run over by the cars near the transfer grounds and killed.

The District Fair for southwestern Iowa, was held in Council Bluffs on the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th of September, on the grounds of the Pottawattamie county Agricultural Society. Great efforts were made by the managers to make it a great success, in which they only partially succeeded. The price of admission to the grounds was fixed at a pretty high figure, which kept away some people. The total gate receipts, however, reached the sum of \$3,670. The weather was unpropitious, being cold and windy a large part of the time. The display of agricultural products was meagre, and the halls devoted to the exhibition were only partially filled. There was a large number of fine cattle on the grounds, some of them being brought from the central and eastern parts of the state. Sheep and swine were also well represented. The portion of the enclosure devoted to agricultural implements also presented a fine appearance, a number of articles from the manufactory of the Council Bluffs agricultural works being on exhibition. The turn-out of fine horses on the grounds was very large, and the trotting and running matches, of which there were a large number, attracted great attention. The best trotting time made was 2:30 $\frac{1}{4}$ , by a horse from St. Louis. On the third day an address was delivered by Hon. John Scott, of Story county. The Olmstead zouaves, a military company from Des Moines, were on the grounds, and made a very creditable display. None of the premiums awarded were paid, except on horses, and indeed no complete list of them was ever published. During the continuance of the fair, the ladies of the Episcopal church had a booth on the ground for the sale of refreshments, the net proceeds of which were donated to the church.

Early this year, very general attention was attracted towards the new southern railroad, proposed to be constructed from the Mississippi river to the Pacific. Gen. Dodge, of Council Bluffs, was appointed its chief engineer. The confidence in which he was held, together with the general dullness in the labor market and in business which prevailed, induced a great many engineers, contractors, merchants, mechanics, laborers and speculators to embark in this new enterprise. Probably several hundred of these classes left the county for Texas during the season. Some of these took their families along as fall approached, among whom was Gen. Dodge himself, who had his residence in Marshal during one winter. For the first fifteen months all went on prosperously. Employment and fair wages were secured for all those who were willing to work, or engage in any way in building the road.

The Young Men's Christian Association, of Council Bluffs, maintained a missionary and also a free reading room; the latter was conveniently located on Pearl street, was well stocked with the newspapers and magazines, and rapidly increased in public favor. At a meeting held on the last Sunday evening in August, in Dohany's Hall, over \$1,000 was raised for the benevolent purposes of this organization. Later in the year a lecture course was organized under its auspices, and a course of six excellent lectures delivered during the following winter by B. F. Taylor, President Magoon, Col. Sanford, Mrs. Scott Siddons, Frederick Douglass, and W. A. McMasters. A. W. Street was president and E. E. Harkness secretary of the association.

The Congregational Association for southwestern Iowa was held in Council Bluffs, commencing on the 25th of October. It had been first organized in 1854, in a log cabin in the same city by three ministers, viz: Rev. G. B. Hitchcock, Rev. G. G. Rice and Rev. John Todd. The two latter were present at the meeting this year, the Association having grown to consist of twenty-five cler-

gymen. It continued in session during three days, transacting much interesting business. Rev. H. W. Haywood, of Magnolia, was moderator.

On the 16th of October, the barn of Mr. William Merwherter, in Walnut township, was destroyed by fire, together with a large amount of property stored in it. The total lost to Mr. M., who was one of the oldest and most industrious farmers in the county, was about \$3,000. Other farmers lost quite heavily from prairie fires this fall, which proved to be more than usually destructive. Among these were Mr. Nelson Lewis and A. L. Swigert in Kane township.

The political canvas in the county this year, although a president was to be elected, was an exceedingly languid one. Both parties formed clubs, rented halls and had occasional meetings, but the attendance upon them was limited and very little enthusiasm was evolved. The Republicans of the county were almost unanimous in favor of the nomination of Col. Wm. F. Sapp for congress in this district, but at the congressional convention held on the 1st of August, the choice fell upon Judge James W. McDill, of Union county, and he was subsequently elected by a very large majority. The opposition at first nominated W. H. M. Pusey for the same position, and he would undoubtedly have made a strong candidate, but he was compelled to decline on account of private business, and his place on the ticket was taken by W. W. Merritt, of Montgomery county. For the office of District judge, the names of J. R. Reed and L. W. Ross, both of Council Bluffs, were presented to the convention, but the former was nominated, although the latter received the vote of his own county. The fact that first choice of the Republicans of the county for each of these two important offices was rejected by the nominating convention, had rather a depressing effect upon the action of the party throughout the canvass, although both of the successful candidates received a full party vote. E. E. Aylesworth, of Council Bluffs, was

supported by the opposition for circuit judge and run handsomely ahead of his ticket in the county. His opponent was J. R. Stockton, and was elected. Judge McDill, immediately on being nominated for Congress, resigned his position as Circuit judge, and J. R. Reed the candidate for the office for the next term, and for which he was in November elected, was appointed to fill the vacancy. The only county officers filled this fall, were recorder and clerk of the courts, and for these positions E. P. Brown and R. T. Bryant, both Republicans, were elected over D. F. Eicher and J. H. Mathews, supported by the opposition. The fall vote of the county was, Grant 1451, Greeley 1148, O'Connor 37. In Kane township Grant received 689, Greeley 685, O'Connor 11, A. M. Battelle and B. W. Hight were at the same election, elected supervisors over J. M. Talbot and Peter Bechtelle, the opposing candidates. During the fall, Fitz Henry Warren, John A. Kasson, Gov. Kirkwood and W. B. Allison delivered addresses.

The most effective speech that was made during the canvass, was delivered by Mrs. Matilda Fletcher to a crowded assembly in the court house. This lady, a resident of Council Bluffs, had, by singular perseverance and energy, won for herself a prominent place among the lady lecturers of the country. Her first public addresses were clothed in poetic language, but throwing these aside, she boldly launched out upon the discussion of the most important questions in sober prose. Possessed of a well formed person, a healthy constitution, a pleasing address and more than ordinary powers of effective elocution, her appearance in the political arena called forth the largest gatherings of the campaign in Iowa as well as in other states, and secured the most flattering testimonials from the public press.

On the 5th of November an altercation occurred at Henry Creek station in Rockyford township, between James McMillen and Alfred Fraser, in relation to an election bet in the course of which the latter struck the former a severe blow on the head with his fist, from the



effects of which <sup>✓</sup>McMillen died almost instantly. <sup>✓</sup>Fraser was arrested and afterwards indicted for manslaughter, but on the trial was acquitted by the jury.

A fine educational institution was erected in the fall in Council Bluffs, as a school for girls under the charge of the sisters of charity connected with the Roman catholic <sup>✓</sup>church. It is situated in the southwestern part of the city. The main building is 27 by 56 feet, with a wing 18 by 24 feet, all of brick, two stories in height. It cost, with the lots, about \$8,000, and the school was opened during the winter in charge of the sisters. It is intended as both a day and boarding school. The catholics also about the same time established a boys' school, thus withdrawing their children almost entirely from the public schools of the city.

Council Bluffs was this year largely infested with gamblers, and all the efforts of the police officers were unable to suppress them. The three-card monte trick was the most common device by which they operated on the unwary. They infested the railroad trains also, and every few days some unlucky traveler on the cars, or transient sojourner at the hotels was induced to invest his money on the turn of a card and of course always lost. Having secured the money they would frequently return a part to their victims, on condition that they would not "squeal," that is, inform on the scoundrels, and in this way they most generally escaped detection.

Modern spiritualism found many followers in the county, among whom were some of the best and most substantial citizens. They held regular meetings and numerous lectures were delivered by its advocates. In September they organized themselves into a permanent society, adopted a constitution, and elected as officers, S. H. Riddle, president, A. Sundy vice-president and F. S. <sup>✓</sup>Powel, secretary.

In December the market reports in the *Avoca Delta*, <sup>✓</sup>gave the prices of farming products as follows: Wheat, 85c; corn, 13c; oats, 15c; live hogs, \$3.00 per hundred, Council Bluffs prices were but little in advance of these. A very large crop of corn was raised in the county.

amounting in the aggregate to about 1,614,249 bushels, as shown by the census returns taken the following spring. The number of bushels of wheat harvested in 1872 was 323,174, and of oats 239,249. The year 1872 was regarded as a dull year in business matters. Times were said to be hard and money scarce. The low price of produce largely contributed to this state of things. But the settlement of the county moved steadily forward. A great many new farms were opened and the foundation of future prosperity laid.

The teachers' institute was held the week preceeding Christmas. The weather was intensely cold, but the attendance was very large. It was conducted almost entirely by the teachers themselves, and was one of the best ever held in the county. Mr. Jacobs, the county superintendent presided, and Messrs. Armstrong, Chandler, Massey and Rue among the gentlemen, and Misses Fish and Flynn among the ladies, took an active part in carrying forward the work of instruction. Lectures were delivered during the week by Reverends DeForest, Thickstun, and Cargil and Prof. Hotchkis, of Des Moines.

The epizootic prevailed very extensively during the fall and winter of 1872-3 throughout the county. Nearly every house was more or less affected by it, seriously interfering for a couple of months with business. In Council Bluffs the streets were almost entirely deserted by vehicles for two or three weeks, and the street cars were run by mules. Hand carts were used in conveying goods over the city, and even in some instances to the railroad depots. Great care was taken of the animals and very few fatal cases occurred.

This year was noted in the courts of the county by a great increase of legal business. The district and circuit courts each sat over two months, and the United States district court over four weeks. It seemed impossible for the judges to dispose of all the business placed on their docket. The trials in many cases were severely contested and protracted to several days. The principal law firms were Baldwin & Wright, Clinton, Hart & Brewer, Sapp, Lyman & Hanna, Ross & Daily, and Mont-

gomery, Reed & James. Robert Percival, J. H. Ketley, E. A. Aylesworth and E. R. Paige were also prominent attorneys, and the bar of the county was noted for its strength and ability. Col. D. B. Daily discharged the duties of prosecuting attorney, under appointment from the governor, of this judicial district. Judge Douglass retired from the bench of the circuit court at the end of the year. He had earned and possessed the general confidence of the profession.

---

✓  
**FORT MADISON.**

---

IN 1806, Gen. Zebulon Pike (who was killed during the war of 1812, at York, in Canaqa) was ordered by the War Department to ascend the Mississippi from St. Louis to the Falls of St. Anthony and locate the sites of a number of forts for the protection of the frontier at such points as he might think most suitable. In the discharge of this duty he selected Fort Edwards (now Warsaw), Fort Madison, Fort Armstrong (Rock Island), Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien), and Fort Snelling, near the Falls of St. Anthony; and five more beautiful locations all must admit could not have been found upon the Mississippi,—Fort Edwards and Fort Madison pre-eminently so. In accordance with his recommendation the forts were built and garrisoned. During the year of 1812 Fort Madison was burnt, from the fact that the provisions gave out, and the well became dry, and the only water to be got was from the river, making it an extremely hazardous undertaking to obtain it, as most of the time the fort was surrounded by hostile Indians, who from their ambush could easily pick off any one who ventured outside the fort. Moreover, a rumor had reached the garrison that the forts above had been taken by the British and Indians, the prisoners butchered, the buildings burnt, and that Fort Madison was to be the next point of attack. Upon the reception of this news, it was decided to burn the fort. The destruction of the building was complete. Nothing remained but the two

Copyright of *Annals of Iowa* is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.